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› 2021 Census: Fewer Australians working 40 hours or more per week

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Media Release

Released 12/10/2022

Source: [Income and work: Census, 2021](#)
[Population: Census, 2021](#)

2021 Census data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals insights into how many hours Australians worked in the week before the Census.

Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician said, "The Census data revealed that 38 per cent of Australians worked 40 hours or more, down from 45 per cent a decade ago.

"Of those working 40 hours or more, nearly all (86 per cent) did fewer than 15 hours of domestic work. However, a third (35 per cent) had childcare responsibilities and 11 per cent provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition, or due to old age".

The Northern Territory and Western Australia continued to report the highest proportion of people working 40 plus hours a week, at 44 per cent and 42 per cent. Tasmania reported the lowest proportion at 33 per cent.

The median hours worked by Australians remained unchanged at 38 hours. The Mining industry recorded the highest median at 48 hours and the Accommodation and Food industry the lowest at 20 hours.

The number of hours worked varied by occupation. "Interestingly, School Principals worked as many hours as Surgeons, with each recording a median of 50 hours per week," Dr Gruen added.

While there are a lower proportion of people working very long hours, most people still work full-time. In the week before the Census, more than seven million people worked full-time, four million worked part-time and one million were away from work.

Australians are balancing work with study, domestic duties and caring responsibilities.

Employment type	Part-time	Full-time
Total people	4 million	7 million
Sex	Two in three are female (2.6 million)	Two in three are male (4.3 million)
Study	700,000 are undertaking full-time study, and a further 264,000 undertaking part-time study	115,000 are undertaking full-time study, and a further 384,000 undertaking part-time study
Unpaid childcare, including own children	One in three (1.3 million)	One in three (2.4 million)
Domestic work (such as washing, gardening, shopping for groceries and meal preparation)	10 per cent of part-time employed males undertook 15 or more hours of domestic work, compared to 32 per cent of part-time employed females.	10 per cent of full-time employed males undertook 15 or more hours of domestic work, compared to 21 per cent of full-time employed females.
Providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, a long-term health condition or due to old age	530,000 (13 per cent)	770,000 (11 per cent)
Volunteering	17 per cent	14 per cent

The 2021 Census counted 7,593 Australians who were undertaking paid employment, completing study, providing unpaid childcare, providing unpaid care to another person, completed 15 hours or more of domestic work and also volunteered.

Table 1: Count of employed persons in 2021

	Person count 2021	% of 15+ population
Employed, full-time	7,095,103	34.1%
Employed, part-time	3,962,550	19.1%
Employed, away from work	991,758	4.8%
Employed Total	12,049,410	58.0%
Unemployed	646,442	3.1%
Not in the labour force	6,888,081	33.1%
Not Stated	1,200,851	5.8%
Total population (15+)	20,784,787	100%

Table 2: Median hours by industry in 2021

Industry	Median hours worked (weekly)
Mining	48
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	40
Construction	40
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	40
Financial and Insurance Services	40
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	40
Wholesale Trade	39
Information Media and Telecommunications	38
Manufacturing	38
Other Services	38
Public Administration and Safety	38
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	38
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	38
Education and Training	35
Health Care and Social Assistance	32
Administrative and Support Services	31
Arts and Recreation Services	30
Retail Trade	29
Accommodation and Food Services	20
All Industries	38

Table 3: Occupations with highest median hours in 2021

Occupation	Median hours worked (weekly)
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers	50
School Principals	50
Surgeons	50
Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers	50
Chief Executives and Managing Directors	45
Livestock Farmers	45

Table 4: Count of persons working and studying

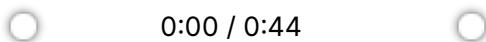
	Full-time student	Part-time student
Employed, worked full-time	115,434	384,140
Employed, worked part-time	699,768	263,522
Total	815,203	647,661

Table 5: Hours of unpaid domestic work for employed persons in 2021

	Employed, worked full-time	Employed, worked part-time	Total
Nil hours	1,521,666	908,725	2,430,391
Less than 5 hours	1,842,974	879,697	2,722,671
5 to 14 hours	2,694,535	1,194,280	3,888,815
15 to 29 hours	760,514	602,844	1,363,361
30 hours or more	245,448	359,415	604,864
Not stated	29,962	17,585	47,551
Total	7,095,103	3,962,550	11,057,653

Download audio quotes

How We Work - Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician



[Download mp3 \[1.04 MB\]](#)

Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician, summarises the 2021 Census second data release, and what stories it tells us.

[Transcript +](#)

Media notes

- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team via media@abs.gov.au (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri)
- Search for 2021 Census data through the [QuickStats tool](https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>).

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